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Princeton students jeer CIA's role and its defenders

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PRINCETON — It was the tense atmopshere of confrontation reminiscent of the late 1960s. The campus was Princeton. The students, about 300 of them spilling out of Frick Hall, were loud.

It began when an unidentified student jumped up on the podium and called for a halt to the proceedings.

The panel of once-powerful men, who were about to discuss the need for covert operations and clandestine attempts to oust foreign governments, must go, he said.

Two students, calling themselves a "working socialist study group," refused to reveal their names. They called the discussion "a blatant liberal fraud — a charade in which the muscle end of America's foreign policy gets a slap on the wrist."

Behind a bench on a raised platform sat five men.

One of them, William P. Bundy, had been at the pinnacle of power during the American involvement in the Vietnam War. He had spent the early part of his career at the Central Intelligence Agency writing long-range assessments of political situations in foreign countries.

Last night, Bundy, who once was assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, said he thought it was a good idea to have agents on hand to overthrow other countries' governments if these governments were bad.

Another panelist, Ray S. Cline, who until recently headed the CIA's intelligence division, agreed. Cline shares with four others the decision to seek presidential approval for covert operations in other countries. Another in that select group, known officially as the 40 Committee, is

Cline participated in 40 Committee decisions on Chile between 1970 and 1973. Last night he said he thought American intervention that led to the overthrow of President Salvadore Allende Gossens was a mistake.

That was little consolation to many at last night's conference who mourned the violent death of the first elected Communist leader in the Western Hemisphere. They hissed and booed Cline and the sector of the U.S. government he represented.

Also on the panel was Morton H. Halperin, who as the senior staff member of the National Security Council during the first year of the Nixon administration, came to know a great deal about covert operations — such as secret bombing raids in Cambodia. Halperin is suing his ex-boss, Kissinger for illegal phone tapping. Halperin is also studying the relationship between national security and civil liberties.

He told the students that covert activities by agencies such as the CIA are dangerous because they are not always limited to countries. Clandestine espionage can be undertaken by the CIA domestically, as in the case of the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, Halperin said. He received a resounding applause.

Later Halperin said Kissinger is a great believer in the need for covert operations.

Moderating the symposium, "Covert Operations: Their use, abuse and control," was Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, a former undersecretary of state and U.S. attorney general.

"I'm tempted to conclude the dangers [illegible] by their continued use," he said.

The discussion began with remarks by William G. Miller, staff director of a spe-

He is working on a bill by Sen. Charles Mathias, R-Md., and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield that would set up a special team to study the country's intelligence operations from top to bottom—with an eye toward overhauling those operations.

"By and large, the American public supported covert operations by the U.S. until the Bay of Pigs," Miller said. He added that American support for covert action took a nose dive after Watergate.

Cline chuckled when hisses followed his introduction. He said it would be a mistake to dismantle the CIA's intelligence-gathering operation because of ill feeling about covert activities which, he said, were minimal.

It included, Halperin explained, loaning Liddy a camera to take pictures to "case" the office to be burglarized. It included developing Liddy's film and it included employing thousands of Cuban exiles living in Miami for as-yet-undisclosed reasons, he said.

Throughout the presentations, save his own, and most of the question-and-answer portion, the tall Bundy sat steely-eyed and aloof. The former Kennedy and Johnson administration official who is now the editor of Foreign Journal, said the CIA's operations since the 1950s have "become greater minuses than pluses."

But the man whose education began at Groton—a prep school in Massachusetts—where the motto is "To serve is to rule," told students here the need for counterintelligence operations with a network of agents still exists.

The toughest problem in assessing the value of the CIA as Bundy said he sees it is this: whether a covert operation can be approved in the case where foreign, clandestine intervention would help in the triumph of good political leadership, with a chance of popular support, over a despotic government. In such a case, Bundy said, covert operations are justifiable.

Credibility, or the lack of it, figured highly in last night's discussion and students's reaction to it.

Bundy denied there had ever been any connection between his work in the CIA and later assignments in the Defense and State departments.

In a conversation after the conference, Bundy denied he had acted as a "gatekeeper" while an assistant secretary of state, trying in effect to block antiwar views within the State Department from reaching the White House.

That charge appeared in "The Best and the Brightest," a book by former newspaperman David Halberstam.

"A typical Halberstam lie. A cheap innuendo" were Bundy's comments to the charge. "When I was at Defense I worked for (Defense Secretary Robert) MacNamara.

When I was at State I worked for (Secretary of State Dean) Rusk," Bundy